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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR DAS JONES AND EUR/SCE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA: SERB TRI-PRESIDENCY MEMBER CALLS NATO GOAL
INTO QUESTION

Classified By: DCM Jonathan Moore for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Bosnian Serb Tri-Presidency member Nebojsa Radmanovic, who has thus far supported Bosnia's NATO aspirations, has begun to publicly support calls for further discussions on NATO membership because of "declining support" for NATO in Republika Srpska (RS). He has also indicated that he might support a referendum on this issue in the RS. In the past, Radmanovic has generally stressed that Bosnia's aspirations to NATO membership had been settled by previous decisions of political leaders, including a nearly unanimous parliamentary decision supporting NATO membership. In addition, Radmanovic supported a recent Presidency decision to apply for a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) on October ¶2. However, in line with an increasingly combative stand of RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik toward the international community, Radmanovic appears to have begun to backtrack on the NATO issue, presumably under pressure from Dodik.

A Call for "Further Discussions"

¶2. (C) Radmanovic called a meeting September 28 of representatives from largely Serb parties, including his own Alliance of Independent Democrats (SNSD), Serb Democratic Party (SDS), People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Democratic People's Alliance. At that meeting, Radmanovic made a number of comments to the press that raised questions about Bosnia's NATO ambitions in light of what he called declining support for NATO in the RS. He said that the RS National Assembly should "organize a discussion one more time, since, in the meantime, in the last four years since its positions were taken regarding accession to NATO, many things have changed." He added that "one cannot exclude the possibility of citizens expressing their opinion"--a clear reference to the possibility of a referendum on the issue.

¶3. (C) Radmanovic also rejected the possibility that NATO requirements could be used as a basis for amending the Bosnian constitution. He said that "If changes to the system of decisionmaking in BiH are necessary for NATO membership, then we in the RS are against it."

Comment

¶4. (C) It is not clear whether Radmanovic's recent comments reflect a genuine change in his point of view or whether he is bowing to pressure from his political boss, SNSD president Milorad Dodik. An advisor to Radmanovic told us today that Radmanovic's recent comments will not interfere with the delivery of a letter to NATO requesting a Membership Action Plan for NATO, a letter that Radmanovic signed and that is expected to be delivered in Brussels on October 2. Dodik recently met with SDS President Mladen Bosic, and at the end

of that meeting agreed with the SDS leader that it might be useful to submit the issue of NATO membership to a referendum. Dodik had been more ambivalent about support for NATO membership than Radmanovic, but had also shied away in the past from calling for an entity referendum. While Radmanovic's rejection of political reforms in connection with NATO membership is problematic in itself, any referendum would be seen not as a referendum on BiH's membership in NATO, but rather on the inflammatory question of the RS versus the state.

ENGLISH